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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL
LANSING

KRISTEN E. COLUMBUS
CHAIRPERSON
VENDELLA M. COLLINS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2014

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council is a 21-member body of citizens appointed by the Governor to advocate for persons with developmental disabilities.

As of 2013, Michigan is 1 of 5 states that continues to use the 'R-word' in their bills, statues and other legislation.

We strongly and enthusiastically support Senate Bills 805-811 for the following reasons:

1. The phrase mental retardation has evolved from a medical diagnosis to a hurtful, offensive and derogatory word used to demean and offend people with disabilities. We want the phrase to evolve to people first language, which puts the emphasis on the person instead of the disability (ex. Instead of saying a disabled child; you would say a child with a disability).
2. This legislation will put Michigan in line with 45 other states and the federal government. President Barack Obama signed Rosa's Law in October of 2010. The signing of Rosa's Law was a significant milestone in establishing dignity, inclusion and respect for all people with intellectual disabilities.

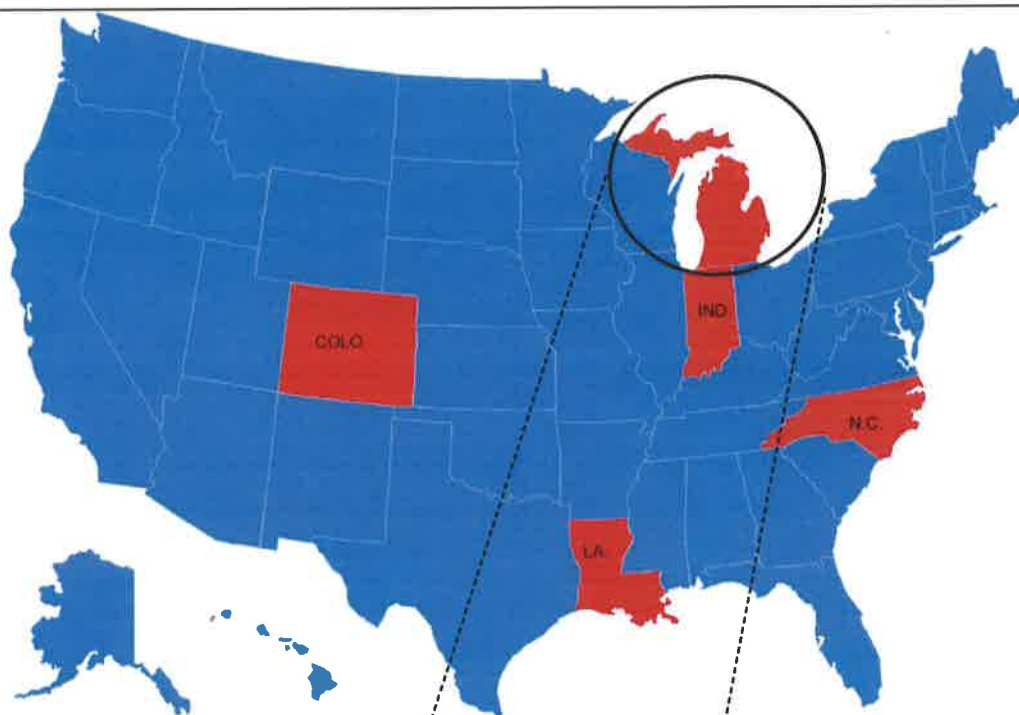
Today, we acknowledge words do hurt. The verbal abuse from words can be just as devastating and hateful as physical abuse. We urge you to stand with ALL citizens and remove hateful speech from our laws and replace it with people first language and other inclusive language.

Kristen Columbus, Chair
Vendella M. Collins, Executive Director
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States Still Using “Mental Retardation” in Their Legislation

(in red)

As of 2013, all but five states in the United States have at least introduced legislation to change the language in their state from ‘mental retardation’ to people first language.*



■ **In 2009:** the DD Council started a campaign to end the use of the word retard. 10,000 pledges have been collected

■ **As of 2010:** 39 codes, 6 senate bills and 7 house bills use Mental Retardation, retard, retarded and other variations

In
Michigan

■ **In 2014:** the Mental Health Commission recommended to eliminate Mental Retardation in Michigan law

■ **Today:** the Senate Health Policy Committee discusses removing Mental Retardation from laws

* Information directly from: <http://www.r-word.org/contact-your-local-government.aspx>
Policy is always changing therefore some of the states could have passed legislation already. Please check with that State.
Information on Michigan can be found by contacting the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council at:
mdch-dd-council@michigan.gov or visit www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil

